



February 1, 2024

Chairman Brandon Smith  
Kentucky State Senate  
Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee  
700 Capital Avenue  
Frankfort, KY 40601

**Re: Senate Bill 60; Repeal Hunter Safety Education Course Requirement**

**Position: Oppose**

Dear Chairman Smith and Members of the Senate Natural Resource and Energy Committee,

On behalf of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, we write to respectfully express our opposition to Senate Bill 60. The legislation would prohibit the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources from requiring that a hunter safety education course be completed before purchasing a hunting license or permit. Hunting is a cherished pastime in Kentucky, and recruiting more hunters that have completed a hunter safety education course helps minimize potential accidents in the field to protect hunting opportunities for future generations.

Founded in 1989, the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF) is the informed authority across outdoor issues and serves as the primary conduit for influencing public policy. Working with the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC), the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus (GSC), and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC), CSF gives a voice to hunters, anglers, recreational shooters, and trappers on Capitol Hill and throughout state capitols advocating on vital outdoor issues that are the backbone of our nation's conservation legacy.

Hunter safety education courses have been successfully implemented in all 50 states. The programs vary by state, but many states, like Kentucky, require a live fire component that gives participants the chance to learn hands on firearm safety. This allows participants to learn how to safely handle a firearm prior to heading afield.

Since 1949, nearly 500,000 students annually complete a hunter education course, which totals nearly 40 million students, according to the International Hunter Education Association. During this time, hunting related accidents have decreased dramatically despite the record number of game species like deer and turkey, among others, and robust participation in hunting for these species.

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**Your Inside Connection to Outdoor Legislation**

Rather than making hunter safety education requirements optional, we encourage the Committee to explore means to maintain the current prerequisite in Kentucky and explore options to expand hunter safety education for youth. In 2022, West Virginia expanded hunter safety education course offerings beyond high school to include middle schools. Similarly, there are a pair of bills in the Michigan Legislature this session that would create a model firearm safety course for schools to voluntarily offer as an elective. In short, we support expanding hunter safety education course offerings to make hunter safety education more accessible to new hunters.

In closing, to safeguard Kentuckians' ability to continue to enjoy our time-honored traditions, we respectfully encourage you to oppose Senate Bill 60.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Conner Barker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Conner Barker  
Southeastern States Coordinator  
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation  
1104 Jonestown Lane  
Lexington, KY 40517  
[cbarker@congressionalsportsmen.org](mailto:cbarker@congressionalsportsmen.org)